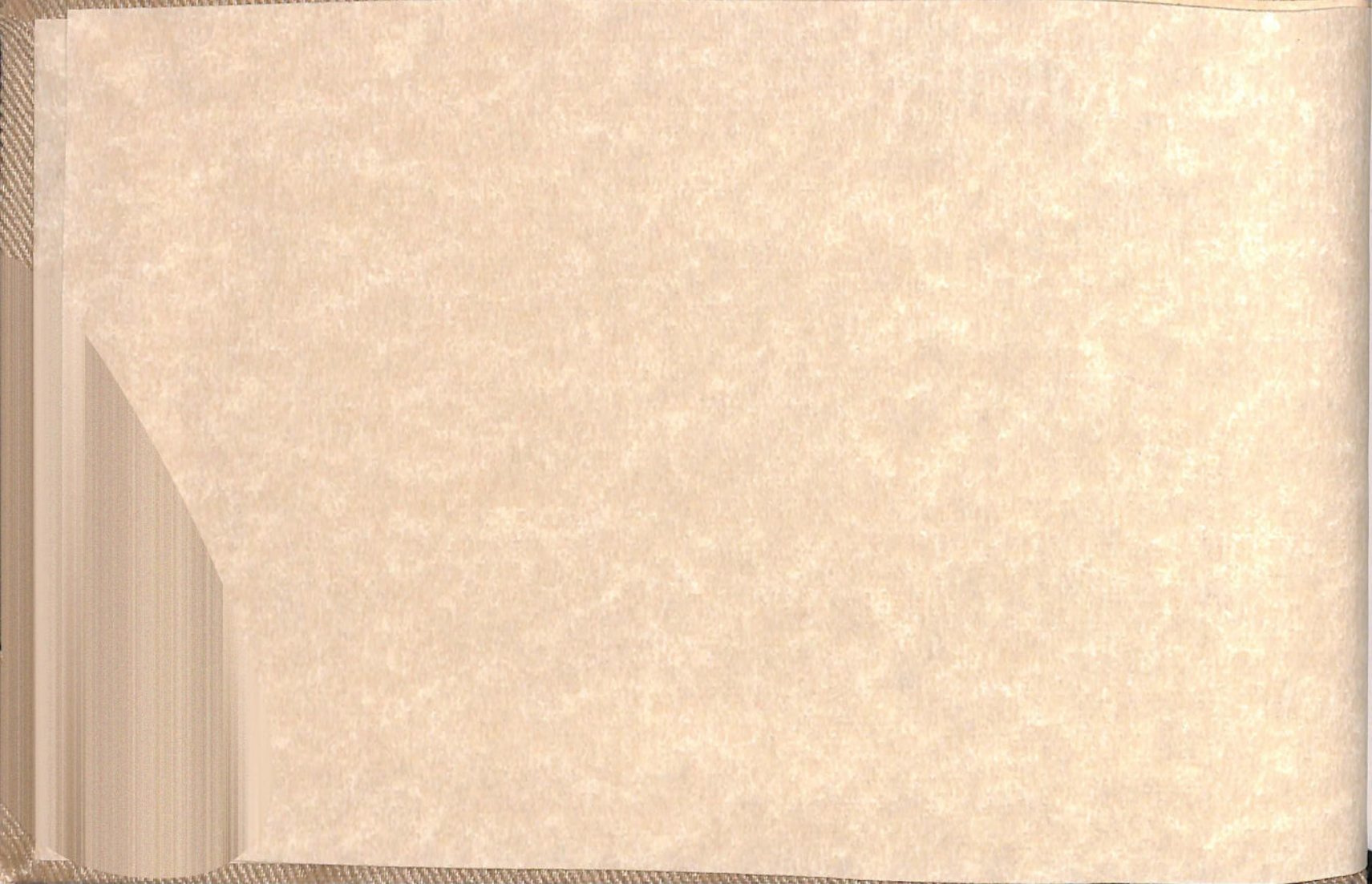


Travels with Baba:

I created this book specially for our friends who are Baba Lovers. I had done the drawings just as a personal meditation for myself. But then I wanted to share them in a gift. So I thought what text could I put with them? I have found that there are many stories from Baba's life that give me insight as to what he may doing in my own life. One of my favorite was how he would be going to catch a train with all his mandali and all their baggage and they were sure they could never make it on time... yet they always did with extra effort. So then I thought of other stories of traveling with Baba and thought that each of our lives is a journey with Baba and so these stories would be a nice reflection of that. So I selected stories that showed the many aspects of traveling on this life journey with Baba.







travels with Baba

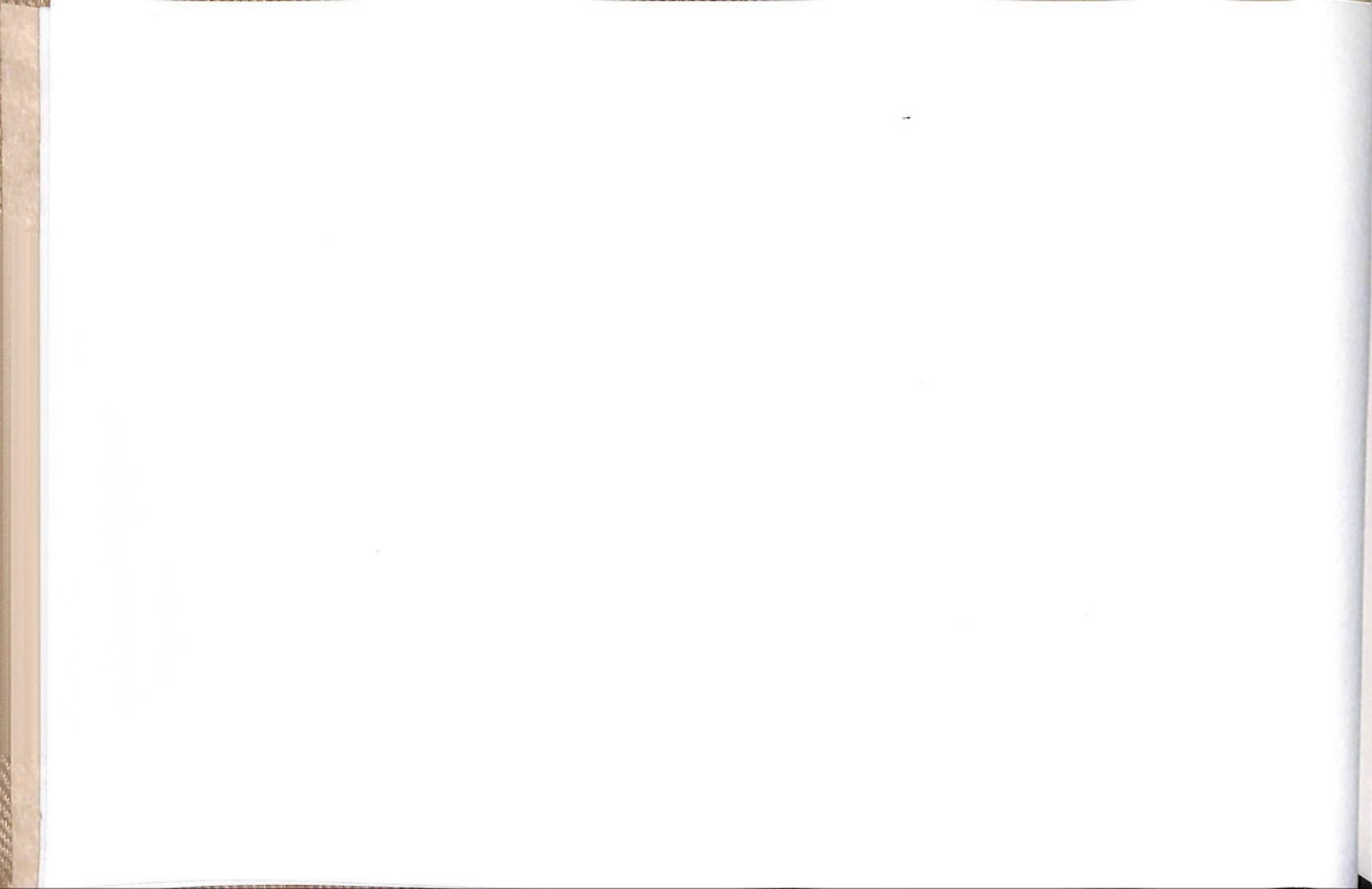
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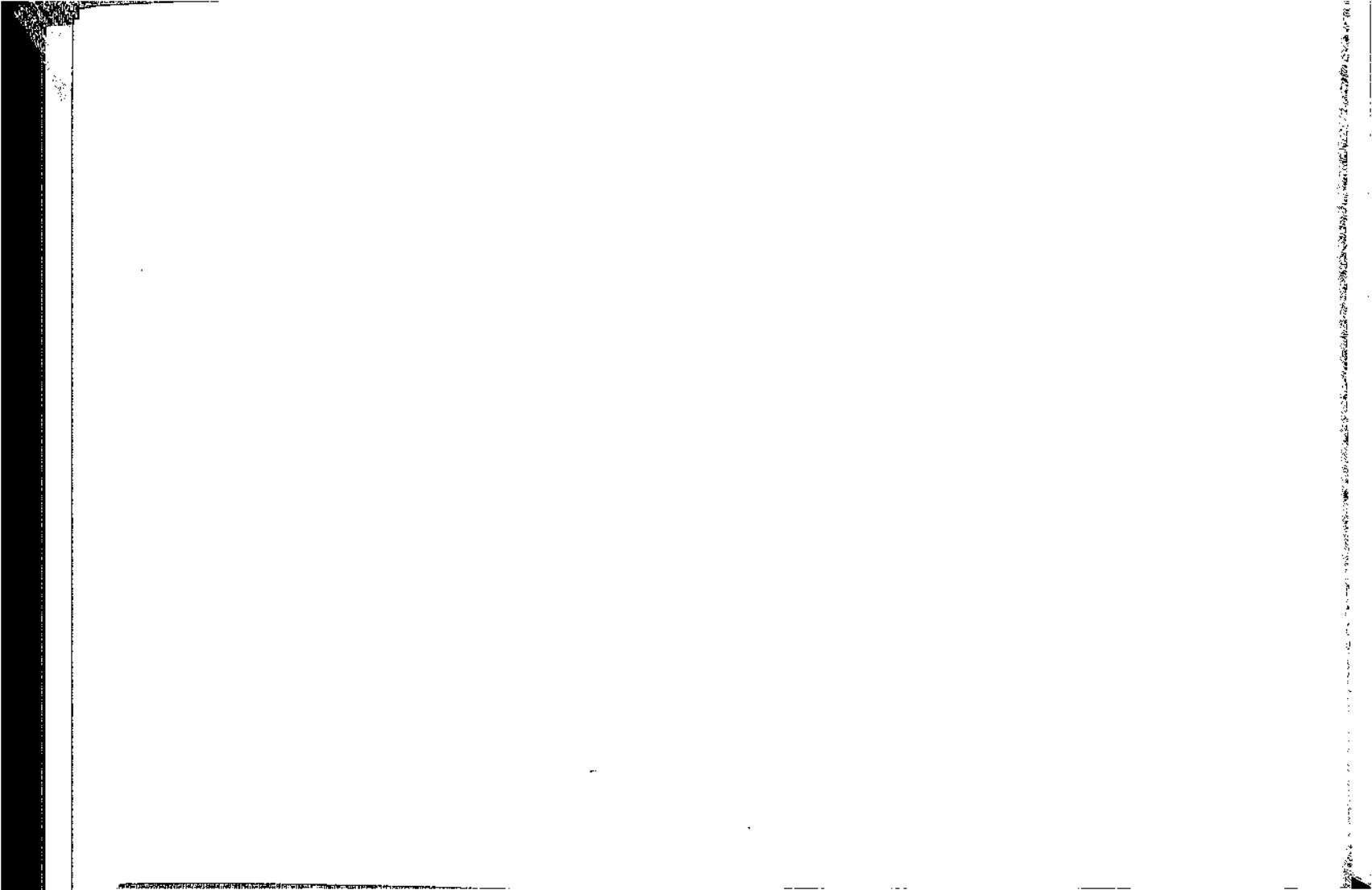
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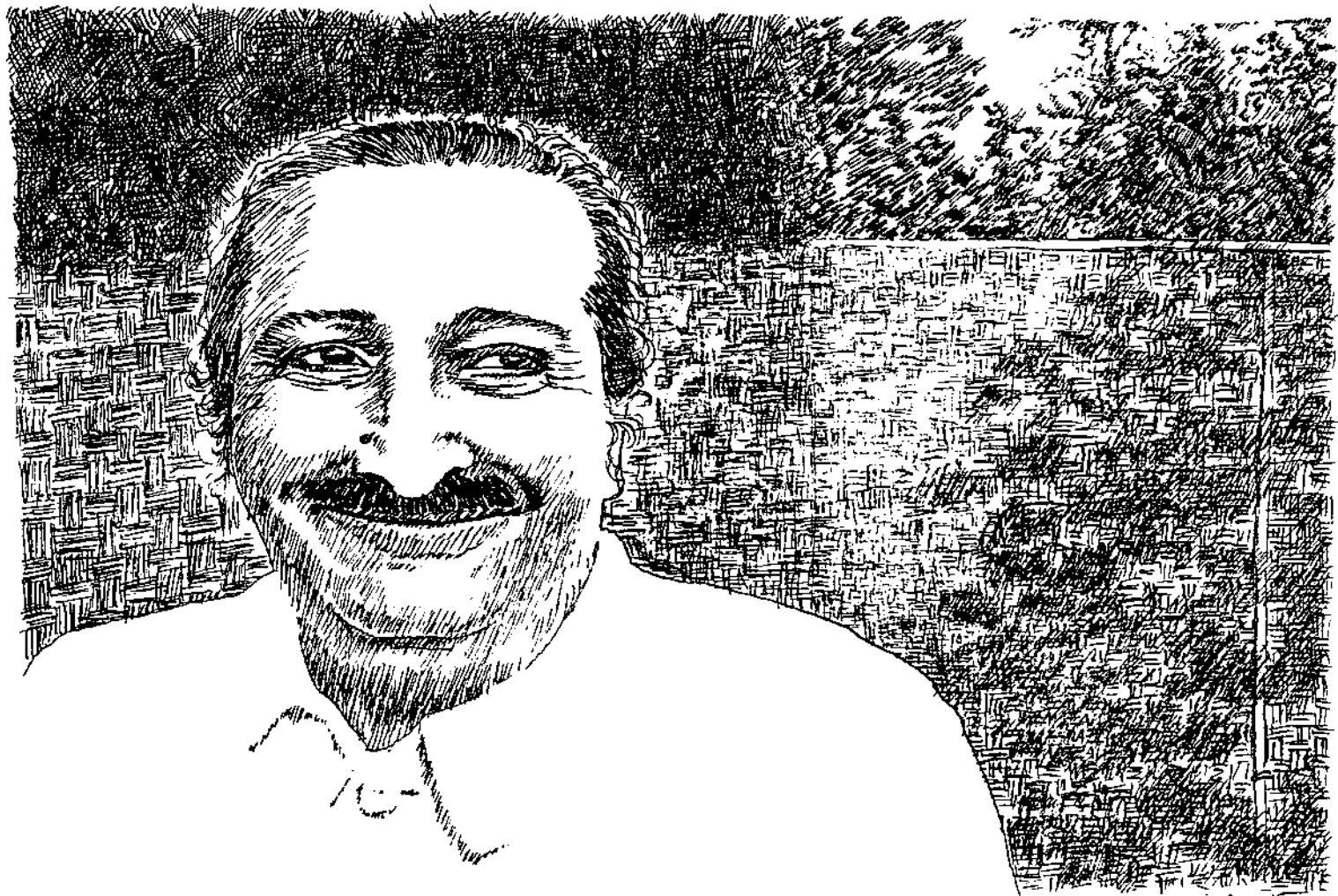
To try to relate something of an unusual journey, taken in these recent times with a modern Sadguru through the spiritual centers of India, can be at best but a limited telling, as His unlimited realms of spiritual working are beyond human comprehension. Even on the material plane no one disciple can possibly take part in all of the Master's manifold activities. His journeyings sow the seeds of spirituality. Time conceals much of what a Master does, but reveals in true light what a Master is; for His very being makes every act, however seemingly commonplace at the moment, an abiding reality beyond time and place.

Elizabeth Patterson
Meher Baba Journal May 1939

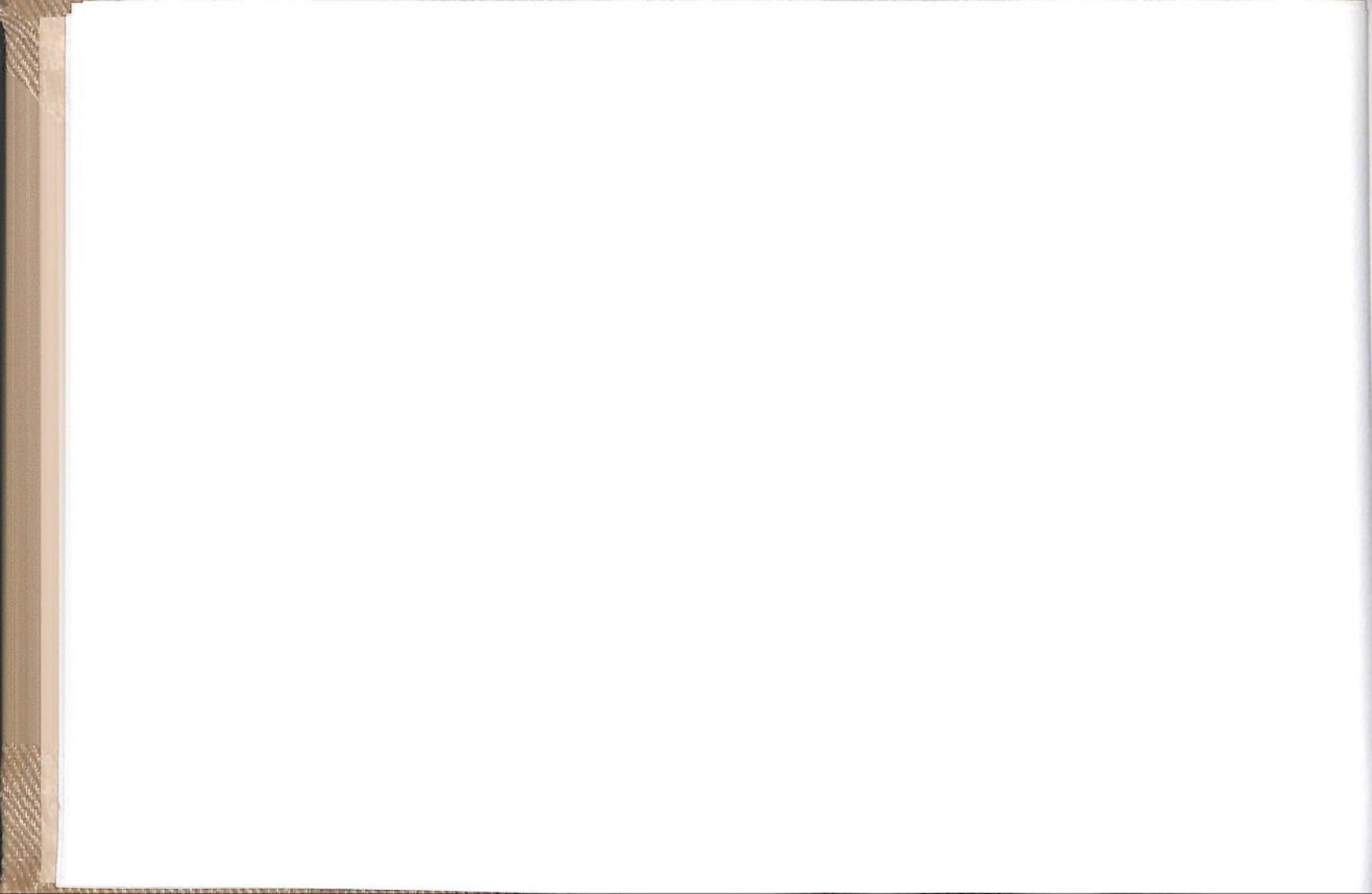








2012/05/25



Traveling with Baba

You all have heard me tell stories concerning railway trains many times. I don't know why it is but so often it seems my memories of Baba have to do with trains. God knows what work Baba was doing with trains, but it is good because now every time you ride on one, you can think to yourself, "Baba rode on trains all over India, perhaps he rode on this one as well." Think of all the millions of people in India now who are unknowingly taking Baba's darshan every day by riding on trains that Baba might have ridden on at one time. Of course, this is an unknowing and unconscious darshan. But with Baba lovers, it is conscious.

That is what Baba means when he says that all of creation should be a constant reminder of the Creator. In almost anything you do, you can think to yourself that at some point in this Advent Baba also shared that experience. That is the power of the personal advent of the Avatar. By taking human form, and living so completely as a human, it is easy to associate everything we do in our daily lives with Baba because Baba too has shared the human experience.

But now I have gotten side tracked, I have gotten off the train, as it were, and am wandering away into the station. But before getting back on board, let me just say something about traveling with Baba. If you were to ask me what was Baba's favorite mode of transportation, I would not be able to answer. Baba traveled by train, He flew on airplanes, He traveled by boat, by bullock cart, by car. He walked long distances on foot, He's been ferried in rowboats, in dugout canoes, He's ridden camels and elephants and donkeys.

The one thing I can say, however, from my experience with Baba, is that He never liked to travel in comfort. However we traveled with Baba, we were always uncomfortable. When we traveled by train we almost always went third class, especially in the early years. From hearing some of you talk, you

think even first class train travel can be difficult, but believe me, traveling by third class in those days was a constant battle. First you had to fight even to get on board the train. And once you got on, you had to fight to secure a place to sit down and a place to store your luggage. And finally having attained that, you had to be constantly on guard that someone didn't steal your space from you. At each station you had to be ready to do battle to see that others didn't invade your area and overwhelm you.

Of course, for us, this task was more serious than for others because we were not fighting for ourselves but to protect the physical form of the God-Man, Meher Baba. That is why we found it so nerve wracking to travel by train with Baba, because there was the constant anxiety of whether we would be able to get him safely on the train or not. For ourselves, we didn't care. We were young and strong and could make do with whatever we found. But for Baba's physical comfort, we had to take care, and it used to be a kind of torture for us because we never knew whether we would be able to protect Baba adequately or not.

And for some reason, Baba seemed to travel most when there were signs put up all over the train stations in India reading, "Only travel when you must." All during the war years when the trains were always overcrowded and most of the cars were reserved for the military, we traveled throughout India. After partition when the trains were piled high with corpses and it wasn't safe to go anywhere, we traveled all over. Again I don't know why this was; if Baba traveled so much because of the conditions, or it was just coincidence that when conditions were worst for traveling we traveled the most.

Nor was it just the train travel which was difficult. I think some of you may have heard me tell about the time we had just completed a long and arduous journey by train. As usual we were completely exhausted. For even once we managed to find space on the train and were settled in, we couldn't completely relax. Baba never wanted us to sleep when we were traveling with Him. "don't doze," He would gesture to us. "Don't doze, don't even close your eyes."

Sometimes it would be so hot, and our train rides were not two or three hour affairs; we would travel for long distances, which means we would be on the train for hours altogether, but Baba always liked us to keep awake and stay alert. For me it wasn't so bad, because I was young. But for Gustadjee and Baidul and some of the older ones it became difficult. Especially in the summer, when it was so hot, and we had been sitting for hours and hours and the train's rocking motion tended to lull you into drowsiness.

Baba would lie down. Not all the way, but we would make room on the seat and Baba would sort of curl up and lie down with a scarf over his face. "Don't doze, keep awake," He would gesture and He would lie down, and we would have to sit there and try to stay awake. Poor Gustadjee, just keeping his eyes open in that heat for so long used to irritate them and he would have to soak a handkerchief in water and put it over his eyes to give them some relief.

So after a long and exhausting train trip, we returned to Bombay and we were now driving back to Meherzad in a car. I think Meherjee's driver may have been driving the car, but I don't remember. But after this arduous journey we were at last returning home. But to say that it was much better in the car would be to exaggerate for there would usually be four of us, and sometimes even five, crammed into the back seat of a car which could only comfortably hold three.

And why were we in a car in the first place? Not because Baba preferred it, but because His lovers were concerned about Baba's comfort. They didn't like to think of their Lord walking all over India, or traveling by third class trains, or being jolted about in a bullock cart. So, out of their love for their Beloved, they purchased a car and gave it to Baba for His use. And because of their love, Baba accepted. I tell you it's all because of love. Everything is because of love. The good and the bad, it's all because of love.

Anyway, because of their love for the Lord, and because of His love for His lovers, the Lord

happened to be in a car coming to Meherazad. Of course they had gotten the car for Baba thinking He would be more comfortable that way. Perhaps He was, but the rest of us certainly were not, because it was Baba's way to pack as many of us into the car as He could.

Naturally, we didn't like to crowd Baba, so there would be the driver and Baba in the front seat and sometimes one other member of the mandali who always tried to take up as little room as possible so as not to crowd Baba. But in the back seat we used to be packed like sardines and we were hefty people, we were like wrestlers, not like this Lazarus of a fellow Bal Natu that you see there. And what made it worse, Baba never liked to have a draft on Him, so we had to keep all the windows rolled up. It would be so hot and stuffy that you couldn't breathe.

Why did it have to be that way? I still don't know. Why Baba couldn't just put three people in back I'll never know. If He wanted to have more people, why didn't He allow His lovers to give Him another car? I don't know. I only know that this was Baba's way. Perhaps He was only comfortable in discomfort. Whatever it be, we were traveling to Meherazad after that long and exhausting train journey and the car was packed even more than usual. For not only did it have to carry all of us, but so many of our belongings as well. And it was so hot and stuffy, and we were so tired, that, in short, it was enough to make you long for the ease of the bullock cart.

As we were driving along we passed an old man walking along the road with a large bundle on his shoulders. Baba stopped the car. "Let's give him a ride." Baba gestured. "There's no room, Baba," I protested, but I knew it was hopeless. Baba always had a special soft spot in His heart for venerable old men. And this old man walking along the road had a long white beard and was just the type of person Baba was fond of. So I knew it did not matter much what I said, but still I blurted out, "Baba, there is no room, where will he sit?"

Baba gestured that there was plenty of room in the back with us and insisted that we give the



1895



man a lift. So what could we do? I got out of the car and walked up to the man and asked him where he was going and if he would care to go in our car. The old man was delighted. I took the huge bundle off his shoulders and carried it to the car. Now there was barely room for me to sit in the car as it was; I had been sitting on the very edge of the seat near the door. but I opened the door and the old man gratefully sat in the spot where I had been sitting. I didn't see how I was going to be able to squeeze back in. And I still had the big bundle.

There was no room for the bundle on top of the car or in the dickey because they were already overloaded with our luggage. So what to do? For me this was the last straw. If Baba wanted to try and squeeze one more person in the car, that was His prerogative, but I didn't see why Baba insisted on picking up someone who had such a big bundle with him.

So I said, "Baba, what about this bundle, there's no room. "Put it in back with you." Baba gestured impatiently. So I took the bundle and by brute force managed to jam it inside. Now there wasn't an inch of space left. So I slammed the door shut and said, "Okay, Baba, now everything's in, go, I'll walk." And I went storming off.

I had just become completely fed up with it. If Baba wanted to overcrowd the car, that was fine, but I didn't see why I had to endure it; I felt it would be more comfortable to walk the whole distance than to ride any further in such an overcrowded car. Of course, Baba got upset and ordered me back. He pricked my ear and told me to get in the car. Baba indicated that I should sit in the front seat with Him, so I got in and we drove off.

Baba was always so compassionate with us; He let us have our moods, He let us express ourselves. But after these little outbursts, He expected us to quickly regain our senses, if not our moods, and continue to live as free men - men who had become free by exercising our free will to become slaves at His feet. And what is more, Baba helped us regain our senses, by little gestures of thoughtfulness, such as making room on the front seat for me to sit.

China in June

As you will recall, my brother Herbert had seen Baba for five days in September 1931, before departing for his teaching position in China. Now, in 1932, China was in a state of upheaval and constant disturbance. Baba cabled Herbert that some of His disciples would be visiting him in Nanking and would he arrange for their stay until Baba arrived to pick them up on His return across the Pacific from California? ...

On June 22, Jal and Herbert went to meet Baba, who was accompanied by Chanji, Behram, Adi and Kaka. The party was very tired from the stay in the United States and the long journey across the Pacific. Baba was dressed in a European white suit and Panama hat. Rooms had been booked in a hotel overlooking the Bund, the busy street and waterfront on the Whangpoo River.

On arrival, Baba and his party immediately had tea and then Baba said He wished to go around the city and mix with the Chinese crowds. At that time, my brother had very little experience with Baba's ways - not as much as I had, which was also very little - and he was still rather awed and awkward in his presence. He took Baba and his group along the Bund, then from the French settlement through the British, to the war-stricken districts near the North Station, thinking it would interest Baba. But no, not at all. There were not enough people. So they took a tram and saw the Nanking Road, the new, brightly lit Chinese stores, Chunking Road, and other areas. It was nearly 8 p.m. so the streets were densely packed. Baba seemed to like them. After dinner they drove around the three cities - French, British and the fringe of the Chinese city with its gay lights, restaurants, hotels and haunts.

The rest of the visit was very hectic for Herbert. He still had his private work to do, appointments to keep in connection with his official work in China. What did Baba do? He seized the opportunity as a testing ground! He added to my brother's chores and sent him on a frantic tour of all the steamship

agents in Shanghai to book passages for eight or nine people to India and Europe; to bankers to cash drafts and exchange money. Quoting from my brother's notes:

"Baba did not seem to know His own mind and, up till closing time, Chanji and I were hurried off our feet trying for the impossible. At 5p.m. we were in rickshaws going along the Bund towards the hotel. I was exhausted and I said in vexation to Chanji that it was a pity that Baba did not know His own mind, and that I was tired of all this fussing and harrying. Baba did not seem to realize that I had to earn my living and that my other appointments were both important and impossible to postpone. Much of this present shipping business seemed unnecessary.

"I was called into Baba's room and ticked off by Baba: if I worried like this, it was no use my working for Baba! After my original brief visit with Baba in England, and nine months' exile in a very disturbed China, this was the sequel: another test!"

That same evening, they all visited a Chinese restaurant and attempted to eat a wonderful feast with chopsticks. After dinner they took rickshaws - seven in a row- and went to a big cinema in French Town. At 11 p.m. they were due at the station and my brother was on tenterhooks for he knew Baba was running it too close, out to dinner and a late cinema. However, they took a motor car and arrived at the station just as the train was due to leave. The hotel porter was struggling with loads of, to my brother's thinking, unnecessary luggage (as usual). Baba asked my brother if he thought they could rush the train or not? They attempted. The boys struggled into the crowded second-class carriage, full of Chinese people sitting up all night, and a very capable porter squeezed in all the baggage as the train was moving. For Herbert, it was a difficult job to find the others, interpret for them, get refreshments, etc.

The next morning, Friday, June 24, at 8 o'clock they were met in Nanking, where my brother resided, by Pendu and Gustadji. Then home to breakfast. In Herbert's minute ground-floor of a house - five rooms - were now nine persons. After breakfast they went for a walk, climbed up the city wall and

strolled along the top of it. At the foot of the 60-foot wall was a large lake; to the right, the city; and ahead, the Purple Mountain.

In the afternoon they motored up the mountain, hiked across the hillside, finally jumped down the stony, slippery descent to the water temple and then went to the Sun Yat-sen memorial. Baba loved the walk, leading the way cross-country like a scout leader, and He enjoyed the view of the lake, the immense city wall (23 miles long) and the great River Yangtse; then home by car. That evening was spent by all sitting together in Baba's room listening to music.

One day a Perfect Master told a disciple to take a job, to do some service. The next day he told him 'Don't do any work, don't take a job.' The third day the disciple was told to arrange to get married; on the fourth day the Master said 'Don't marry.' The disciple got confused and asked, 'But why do you keep wanting me to undo everything you order me to do?' The Master explained: 'What you understand as "doing" is in fact undoing. Everything that you do by your own will is undoing. Everything that you do and undo by My Will is real doing.'

anecdote by Meher Baba

The Blue Bus

In early December of 1938, Baba and up to thirty women disciples began traveling over India in the special blue bus built for sixteen passengers. (This bus was built by Sarosh Irani, a close disciple who was the owner of Sarosh Motor Works in Ahmednagar.) On our trips the men mandali usually went ahead by third class railway to see to accommodations and other necessities. These tours appeared to have a three-fold purpose: (1) most work; (2) searching for prospective sites for Baba's Universal Centers; and (3) visits to spots of beauty, places of historic interest and the shrines of saints and holy men. All the while Baba's inner work and our training and discipline continued.

Many can testify to Baba's amazing power to work continuously. Baba Himself implied that work was His element - that for which he had come. As we all know, Baba worked at specified periods with the masts, the poor and the masses; but to be with Baba on tour was to see him bent on another work - that of making ever-fresh contacts, be it with man, woman or child. Standing at the railway station, walking by the roadside, driving in the car or waiting at the gate, Baba with His infinite insight and vigilant eye never missed that soul ready to be awakened or helped by the master's push, visible to us perhaps only by His direct "look" at the person. Sometimes he would use one of the mandali to bring about a more personal contact in a natural way, frequently asking him or her to hand over some personal belonging for the erstwhile stranger. On occasion Baba would part with a coat or scarf of His own. Baba has explained that there is a spiritual power and blessing that goes with the gifts from the Master, the gift being only the vehicle by which they are carried. After such contacts, Baba's mood was visibly gay and joyful.

Another characteristic very noticeable in Baba was His great concentration on the work at hand, or several projects in turn, His attention never flagging even when he was physically weary. You never

saw Him "absent" unless working on the inner planes; nor neglecting the matter at hand for the one next on the agenda, though he was capable of a lightning-swift switch from one to the other when the time came. If one did bring up a matter not appropriate to the hour or the day, as I was apt to do, he would quietly but kindly reject it with a smile or look, without making one feel either self-conscious or stupid. On the other hand, he was very quick to seize an opportunity or act on a suggestion when the right moment had come. Hence we seldom knew beforehand what our next move might be, for a change of plan was so frequent. We lived in the eternal NOW. Yet there were times when Baba encouraged us to sit back and relax, be spontaneous, and talk at random "of shoes and ships and sealing wax," as the walrus in "Alice in Wonderland" would say. ...

On its first trip, the bus - painted blue and putty color, with blue curtains, a wash basin, and windows that opened wide - started out so loaded with baggage inside and on top that we never thought it would reach the bottom of the hill safely! So we walked down the hill to lighten the load. Bedding rolls, which were meant only for sheets, blankets, a pillow and a mosquito net, got filled at the last minute with extra shoes and sundry other articles, not excluding books or plates. These bedding rolls the mandali had to hoist early in the morning on top of the bus, by the aid of perhaps only one hurricane lamp and a flashlight. needless to say, Baba soon drastically cut down our individual baggage.

One rarely found more than a few beds at a *dak* (government) bungalow meant for only three or four persons, and when Baba's party arrived (a party of twenty or thirty), the accommodations were cramped, to say the least. Many slept on their bedding rolls. It was the mornings that were difficult. We usually were in bed at night before dark, but the mornings - oh dear! Baba would say, "You must be packed and seated in the bus by 5:30 a.m., ready to start." Breakfast had to be cooked, eaten and cleared, mosquito nets taken down, bedding rolled up and the bus packed - all in semi-darkness. no wonder an unfortunate incident occurred. One of Baba's suitcases was almost lost, although we always

wanted to take special care of His belongings. It turned up eventually under the bus, but Baba used this incident to emphasize the need to guard against carelessness in our travels thereafter. And we did travel a great deal on these tours by bus (and boat) with Baba - to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) in the south, Calcutta in the east, Multan and Quetta in the north, and Gujarat and Goa in the west - practically over two-thirds of India, which at this period had not yet been partitioned from Pakistan.

Motoring in India can never be considered a pleasure, especially by bus on bumpy bullock-cart roads. Every time the bus jolted forward, one received either a jerk in the neck or an avalanche from the luggage racks falling on one's head. A mere nothing, of course, if one were not hungry, squeezed in or overcome with the midday heat. Baba, from the front seat, being quite aware of what was going on behind, often added fuel to the fire by drawing attention to our rising tensions.

Because of the daily strain of loading and unloading, Baba finally issued an order that no bedding would be taken down from the top of the bus before the final stop, say after two or three days' travel. Each had to make a blanket, sheet and mosquito net into a bundle and these bundles were placed in the aisle - lumpy cushions for those who sat on them! As added discipline, we often found ourselves sleeping at night on hard floors with but a blanket underneath and for a pillow, a rolled-up coat or towel.

What was a typical day like? Here is a description: The night before a journey, Baba calls us all together, fixes the hour of departure at around 6 a.m., adding, "Kitty, be ready with breakfast at 4 a.m.; Rano, have the bus packed inside and see Elizabeth (one of the drivers) is called in good time and has a hot cup of coffee before starting." Baba as usual supervises everything and stands by as the bus top is being loaded, or walks up and down the while, appearing deeply engrossed and stopping occasionally to inquire about the position of a certain piece of luggage. Is it well placed, secure, out of the rain? It is usually the mandali who do this sort of packing, but it is Baba who watches over everything, down to

the last detail of the tarpaulin being stretched tightly over all the luggage. Inside there is little space for personal items. We are each allowed one small night-case which has to fit under our seat, but the jolting of the bus batters even these few belongings mercilessly.

Baba usually gets in last and the gangway seats (stools in the aisle to accommodate the extra eight or ten people) cannot be filled beforehand, so we stand a little to one side in the aisle with our camp stools to let Him past. Then begins the excitement. Baba motions, "Quick, quick, shut the door!" and before the door is shut, taps on the window in front of His seat, the signal to the driver to be off.

What with one blanket and one big coat for the night and sack-cushions and extra people, with every corner taken on the floor for Baba's pails (needed for bathing the masts) and everybody's belongings, it is a work of art in itself just to get seated, quite apart from Rano's packing the inside of the bus before we even get on. Arguments begin which only Baba can settle. At first He says nothing, letting our voices get hotter and hotter: "Why can't you be seated?" "There is no room!" "Who has taken my stool?" "This will fall on my head!". Baba seated in the front, appears annoyed and puts His hands to His ears. Silence ensues. Poor Baba! And this was the spiritual life we had come to live - no wants, no desires and no attachments!!

Do not get disheartened or alarmed when adversity, calamity or misfortunes pour upon you. Thank God, for He has thereby given you the opportunity of acquiring forbearance and fortitude. One who has acquired the power of bearing with adversity can easily enter upon the Spiritual Path.

-Meher Baba





Return Journey

After seven wonderful but battering years with Baba, He told me to go back to England, and then to go on to the USA and there to teach ballet.

At that time, very soon after World War II, traveling was difficult, and unless one was going to make business connections for England, it was almost impossible to get from there to America. I mentioned this to Baba and all He did was to smile - stretch out His hands and smile.

He arranged for me to leave Dehra Dun on May 1, 1946, and on that day I departed. (Usually dates were changed.) Baba, accompanied by Kaka, escorted me on the night train as far as New Delhi. It was most unusual, but I traveled in the same compartment with Him and Kaka. I was badly anemic and was suffering from an onslaught of large, painful boils, and although I lay on an uncomfortable slatted seat and, more than that, this was to be my last time for some long period with Baba, I slept in a kind of heavy exhaustion. Whenever I opened my eyes, it was to see Baba sitting up on the opposite seat, His legs crossed in the usual yoga position, apparently discussing something with Kaka; and each time He waved me back to sleep.

On our arrival at New Delhi station, Baba disappeared and Donkin appeared, to give me breakfast at the station restaurant. This was perfectly all right, and since my train south did not go till the evening he politely invited me to luncheon at his club. I refused, and I think he was relieved. To offer to take someone whose clothes made her look like a charwoman to luncheon at an exclusive English military club was an act of great nobility. I had on an overall, a solar topi with a broken rim, no stockings and peasant sandals. My train to Ahmednagar, where I was to break my journey to Bombay, did not start until midnight, and I spent the day in the waiting room. Sometime in the afternoon, the ayah brought me a message telling me to go outside. I did so and there was Baba to say goodbye. He

embraced me, made a sweeping movement with His hands up over His heart, which Kaka translated as, "Take My love to the West," and He then left me. I was left, not having been independently alone for seven years, to get myself first of all to Ahmednagar, and then to England and America.

I arrived at Ahmednagar in an exhausted condition. No one to meet me! Luckily one of Baba's local followers happened to be at the station. He was horrified to see me there alone, and took me to the men's quarters below Meherabad Hill.

Apparently the men had no idea I was coming. They were shocked and took me up the hill to Mansari, who lovingly took charge, bathed me, fed me and put me in her own bed for the night.

The next day Sarosh, who had received orders from Baba to do so, came to fetch me and drove me to Arnavaz's apartment in Bombay. Arnavaz, at Baba's express wish, housed and fed me until I departed for England. She was kindness itself.

Every one of Baba's followers that I met in Bombay was pessimistic about my chances of getting on a boat. Not for at least two months, they agreed. Then, of course, one of those seemingly impossible things happened. I went to the American Express offices, and was told there by a young man that there was no chance of getting on a boat for at least two months. After this pronouncement, he looked wistful and said, "But are you not an American?" He then told me that he was an Englishman and that he badly wanted to go back to England to have a sailing holiday on the Norfolk Broads. Again Baba's crack in the wall . . .

At once, I said, "I spent half my childhood sailing on the Norfolk Broads." We then rapturously compared notes and found that we had both been on Womack Broad, a beautiful sheet of water so difficult to find that few persons had managed to do so. He was so delighted that the next thing was, he was offering to arrange a passage for me. He said, "Be ready and packed and if anyone unexpectedly gets off a boat I will see that you get the berth. But you must be ready to go at a moment's notice."

Within ten days the call came and, accompanied by many of Baba's Bombay disciples to see me off, I went on board a ship and took the vacant berth. Baba's sense of humor again manifested strongly. Not having had much to do with men for seven years, just a slight contact with the men disciples, I now found myself on, of all places, a troop ship! There were five other women on board and we shared a cabin. When one of these importantly remarked that since her husband was a great friend of a certain maharajah, she had only had to wait two months to obtain a passage, I had to stop myself from saying, "You should know Meher Baba; it would then only have taken ten days."

My journey to India during the early part of the war had taken about six weeks. The return journey to England, on a boat carrying soldiers and important military personnel, took only ten days. After longing to see once more the green fields of England, the moment we sighted the Isle of Wight I felt as if an enormous pair of scissors was cutting my umbilical tie with the country of my birth. I did not care anymore, and the tie has never been resumed.

Delia de Leon and Will Backett met me at Waterloo Station. The latter pressed into my hand a small packet of butter. I did not, at the time, realize that it was his week's ration. Dear, kind Will.

For a few days, Minta de Leon put me up at her apartment. The morning after my arrival, I went out to see about food tickets, which were still necessary. During the walk I found that everything seemed to have changed, and as I was walking along Kensington High Street, feeling lost and inadequate, I glanced across to the other side of the busy street and there, to my amazement, in a shop window I saw Baba! Knowing that I was not of the type that has visions, I rushed across the road to find out what it was that I had mistaken for Baba, and there in the photographer's shop window was an almost life-sized enlargement of one of the photographs of Baba taken by this same photographer in 1931.

It was most comforting. I was no longer alone and lost in a changed world

Tea Party

I am reminded of a tea party in a train during the war years. Traveling by train was very difficult during the war. The trains were literally overflowing with people. But somehow we had to do Meher Baba's bidding, and sometimes we had to fight with the passengers, sometimes plead, sometimes bow down to them, and sometimes give a blow.

It so happened at this time that the train was very full. There were some compartments reserved for military personnel and to our astonishment there was one with only half a dozen men in it. Somehow or other I melted the heart of one of the men in that compartment with my pleadings and he permitted us to get inside. Little did we realize what was in store for us.

We were very happy. We felt it was by Baba's grace that this had come about. The military men were friendly and helpful. They seemed to have taken a fancy to us. Baba was very cheerful and we all made ourselves comfortable on a bench at the far end of the compartment in a sort of an alcove reserved for servants of British families who traveled. We chatted with each other and everyone seemed happy.

It was at the next station that the trouble began. The station was crowded with military personnel and they started pouring into our compartment with their guns and luggage and paraphernalia. And more and more came in, far beyond its capacity. They pushed their way in and spread all over the compartment just as the train started. Because their comfort was disturbed, suddenly the military people who were originally there started to pick a fight with the newcomers and there was a lot of shouting and abusing. Before we realized what was happening, it became a riot in that speeding train, a free-for-all, with hockey sticks and rifle butts beginning to be used. It was frightening and we looked on helpless.

Suddenly there was a clap. I looked round and saw Baba was standing on the bench, and had

given a single clap of his hands. I don't know how it could have been heard in that raucous din, but the effect was instantaneous. All stopped and looked up at this man in a long white robe, with arms outspread and hands turned up in a gesture of 'Stop'. From the amazed look on their faces, he must have appeared to them as a heavenly vision. Then Baba gestured and I started to speak out, telling them that it was not good to fight amongst themselves, that their fighting would not solve anything, their fighting should be reserved only for the protection of their country, and so on. After a while Baba gestured, 'Sit down', and they all sat down calmly. Baba sat down and promised them a tea party at the next station; at this they cheered and started conversing amicably among themselves.

At the next station Baba had us order tea for all in the compartment, and with home-made sweets that my auntie had given before we started from Ahmednagar, Baba with his own hands distributed the prasad of sweets. And gradually the passengers became merry, enjoying the tea and sweets, and began talking happily with each other. As they got down at their destination they waved a salute to Baba and left together singing a national song. Baba, without speaking a word, had stopped a very difficult situation.

*To be with a Perfect Master for one moment is equal to a hundred years of sincere prayer
with all one's heart and soul.*

Hafiz - quoted by Meher Baba

Air Conditioning

Our travels with Meher Baba meant a great deal of hardship. Even though we are used to this summer heat, still we feel it greatly whilst in the open. And burdened with masses of luggage, under very trying conditions, we would go out with Baba. The journeys in third class train compartments, jam-packed with people, so that there were no spaces between any two people, and no fans, were ordeals. It was very difficult. But Baba would prefer to go third class.

Later some lovers of Meher Baba who could afford first class train travel, thought that particularly during the summer some comfort should be given to Baba, and they persuaded him to accept from them first class tickets. So Baba accepted and we had the luxury of sitting comfortably, but, because Baba did not like wind or even breeze at all, he would have all the windows shut and no fans on. At least we had sitting room, but otherwise the compartment was unbearably stifling.

So then these well-to-do lovers of Baba thought that Baba should have an air-conditioned compartment: there would be no fans, no air movement, but the temperature would be cool and pleasant for Baba. And again they persuaded Baba to accept the tickets for such travel. Baba was very happy and pleased with their love and thoughtfulness for him, and of course we were very happy that in the height of summer with temperatures around 115 - 120 degrees, we would be traveling in comfort.

I remember we were returning from a tiresome journey, we were returning home, and for the first time an air-conditioned compartment had been reserved for us. We entered the compartment. It was very pleasant, cool and fine. We sat and we chatted as Meher Baba would have us do around him. He did not like or permit us to just sit quietly and gaze at him. He would like people buoyant, all the time saying something, making him laugh, and they laughing with him. He liked cheerfulness and good humour. Well we were there together in the compartment, having a good chat, before the train had





started, and suddenly Baba said: 'Don't you feel the temperature rather too low in this compartment?' We looked at each other; we agreed that it was cool, but for us it was pleasant. Still we said: 'Yes Baba.' He said, "Can you not regulate this temperature?' We replied: 'How do you want it Baba?' 'Just raise the temperature a wee bit more, it is too cold. You all might catch cold, and fall ill.' Again we looked at each other. Then he sent us out to speak to the guard, although by now the train was about to start. But the guard said the temperature was according to regulations and could not be altered. We returned, and as we did so, the train whistle sounded. We told Baba, and he was not happy over the whole matter.

Then it appeared there was a delay in the train starting, even though the whistle had been blown, and Baba said: 'Quick, can you not approach the guard again, and ask for the air-conditioner to be switched off? Can you not do that? Hurry! The train will start and it will be too cold for us all here.' So some of us rushed out, and said to the guard, 'We want the air-conditioner switched off. Can that be done?' And he switched it off.

Imagine the oven we were then in! The windows could not be raised. The carriage was sealed. There we were, perspiring like anything! And Baba looked at us and said: 'Very good climate! Perfect!' 'But Baba, we are suffocating!' 'No, no! This is good,' said Baba, 'Perfect!'

It was the same when traveling by car with Baba. He did not like breeze or direct sunshine on him. But because we would look disturbed, he would allow us to lower the car window a fraction. That was more in recent years, in earlier years he was very strict with us. I remember once, a first class coupe had been arranged for Baba, and there was Baba and myself in it. Baba had all the windows completely shut. All my clothes were thoroughly drenched in perspiration, and I took them off. Baba was asleep. I went very quietly to the lavatory and lifted the lid of the toilet so that I could breathe through the hole which was open to the ground. Then I returned to be near Baba. But Baba was not only sleeping in that stifling heat, he was also covered with blankets. I don't know how he could have been comfortable under such conditions.

A good trick

This story happened just after the partition of India and Pakistan. The partition itself was bloodless but after it, there was tremendous slaughter on both sides with Moslems killing Hindus and Hindus killing Moslems. But Meher Baba continued his work, whether it was world war or racial riots and killings. He would take us from one place to another, with the women disciples and mountains of luggage and paraphernalia. Those were the days when people would not budge from their houses; yet Baba would have the whole family, as it were, with him and ask us to locate houses for three, four or five days to stay in as if everything was normal. Those were the days when trains were loaded with corpses; they were picked up from the rail tracks, thrown into compartments and taken, *en masse*, for burial or burning. The people knew no God, no saint, no compassion, there was but a fury in their heads, - and yet they respected the dead bodies.

Well, we knew of this respect, it was one of the tricks of journeying, and if we were able to get seats in a compartment where there were corpses, then we might have a comfortable journey.

One day we were lucky enough to get a very tiny compartment next to the engine. We were happy. Baba was with us, and there were six or seven of us. And we chatted and whiled away our time between stations. For some time, no new passengers approached our compartment, situated as it was right at the beginning of the train. Baba would have us watch the influx of passengers at each station. 'How is the crowd on the station? Are they coming towards us?' 'No, Baba.' 'Very good,' Baba would say. But then in time the train became full, and the people started seeking room towards our compartment. We said, 'Baba, now is the time we should roll up our bedding and prepare ourselves for the rush.' But Baba said, 'Don't worry, I will lie down like this.' And Baba pulled a white sheet over himself and lay down full-length, just like a corpse. We remained seated. When the people came, and saw that, they went away again. The train started, and then Baba sat up and said, 'That was a good trick!'

Breakfast

Baba was always up very early. At four o'clock he would knock on the door of the caravan, and we all had to tumble out of our nice warm blankets. It would be icy cold when we went outside under the sky and the stars, with no roof over our heads. ...

We would have a very meager breakfast - just a piece of bread that was left over, with no butter or tea. Meheru and I had to roll up Baba's bedding. Baba slept under a tent, a very small tent meant only for one or two people. It had belonged to Norina and Elizabeth. They had left it behind in Meherabad. It wasn't a well insulated tent, so it was just as cold inside the tent as outside. Baba must have wanted it for privacy only.

In the morning it would be so cold that our fingers were blue. They felt stiff and numb with cold. We would quickly tie up Baba's bedding, somehow, while the mandali folded the tent. Eruch had to do this. Then we would do our own bedding and tidy up everything quickly before breakfast. It was still dark at this time and we would be doing all this with one hurricane lamp. Then we would start walking on our way by half past five.

On this particular morning we walked and walked for many miles, and finally it was nine o'clock. Not having had much breakfast and having walked so much, we were feeling empty and hungry. Baba was walking with the mandali. He was leading the way some distance ahead and we were at the back talking to each other. Baba halted and said something to Eruch. Then Baba turned towards us, came back and asked, 'Are you feeling hungry?' We were so happy that Baba asked this question because we were really very hungry that morning. Baba said, 'All right, let us see,' and he looked around and saw some huts in a field far away. There were nice green fields around them and smoke coming out as though someone were cooking. Baba called Eruch. 'See that hut? Go and ask there for bhiksha.'

The woman who was cooking in the mud-and-thatch hut said, 'Oh, yes, I've one bhakri (bread) ready and one is on the fire. I'll quickly make it. I want to give you two bhakri.' This is millet bread, big, fat and circular. Eruch waited for two or three minutes, and in that time she prepared the bread and put a lot of lovely freshly cooked spinach on it. ...

We were cold and hungry so that spinach and bread were very welcome. It was piping hot. Baba took a little piece, and the rest he said we must not eat, but put it in his brass bowl. 'That is for the companions. I will give it as prasad to them.' How thankful and appreciative we were to have that food. To this day, we still remember how good it tasted. ...

How fortunate was this woman who, cooking for her family, had happily given it in bhiksha and Baba had accepted it. She will never know how fortunate she was.

One extremely poor old couple of Amarpura, who lived in a hovel far outside the village, were determined to share in welcoming the Master, and built a small raised square in front of their hut. In spite of his wife's doubts that Meher Baba would come to their poor dwelling, and in spite of the fact that they also had not the courage to invite Baba, the old man was sure that his love would draw the Master to him.

The day of the programme in the village being over, Baba and party proceeded the next morning to the adjacent town. But instead of taking the usual road, Baba insisted to everyone's surprise on taking a little used path in almost the opposite direction. After a time he had the car stopped, and getting down went straight to the home of the old couple. Amidst their tears of joy, Baba embraced them both and seated himself on the erected square to be garlanded. He had accepted their heart's tribute.

-from Mass Darshan of Meher Baba 1953

Finding the Lover

It was a great task set for us by Baba to find the people who were really poor, the needy ones who wouldn't put out their hand to beg. ... They were people who had formerly been rich but who, due to circumstances, had lost their wealth and position. ... We were in South India after the Bengal famine. After serving those who were starving in the famine, we traveled towards the South. ...

It was because of [the] money Baba had collected when he stepped out of the New Life for one day that we could do this work - otherwise it could not have been done. We never used to pluck coins from trees. It was an offering given by Baba lovers to Baba, and Baba spent it like this, on people.

We were in Madras and Baba was thirsty, so we had to find some good water for him. Although we were used to travel and Baba never cared for comfort or special food, nevertheless those who traveled with him had the responsibility of seeing to his needs. We thought that was a great privilege, so we tried our best to get the best that was available and that we could afford. The best drinking water we could get was fresh coconut milk and he liked that, so we went to a shop and Baba stood outside with the other companions while I bargained for a coconut.

When I struck the bargain we had to dress the coconut and then bore a hole through it so Baba could drink from it. While one of us was doing this, another customer was conversing with the shopkeeper about a very well-to-do man who had lost all his wealth and was now leading a very miserable life of poverty with his grown-up daughter.

I was very intrigued by all this, but Baba was thirsty and waiting for me to bring the coconut milk. While Baba was having his drink he gestured to me, 'Go back and hear what the shopkeeper is saying.' Baba had overheard the first part of the conversation as Indians always talk loudly, almost shouting at one another.

I went back. 'Excuse me, sir' I said. 'May I know the name of the person concerned?' 'Why? What have you to do with it?' he asked. 'I'd just like to know,' I replied. So he gave me the name and address and directions to get there. You wouldn't believe it, but no sooner had Baba had that drink than he told us to board the train and go there. I think it was seventy-five or a hundred miles. We went with Baba, and by the time we arrived it was dusk. Because of the touching experiences I had there I still remember the circumstances. It was Divali holiday, the Festival of Lights. As it was late I told Baba to rest on the station platform. I didn't like the idea of his going out in that town, so he rested with the other companions while I went alone and tried to locate the address.

When I found the place, I discovered a big well-furnished building. I knocked at the door, and when someone answered I gave the name of the person that had been given to me.

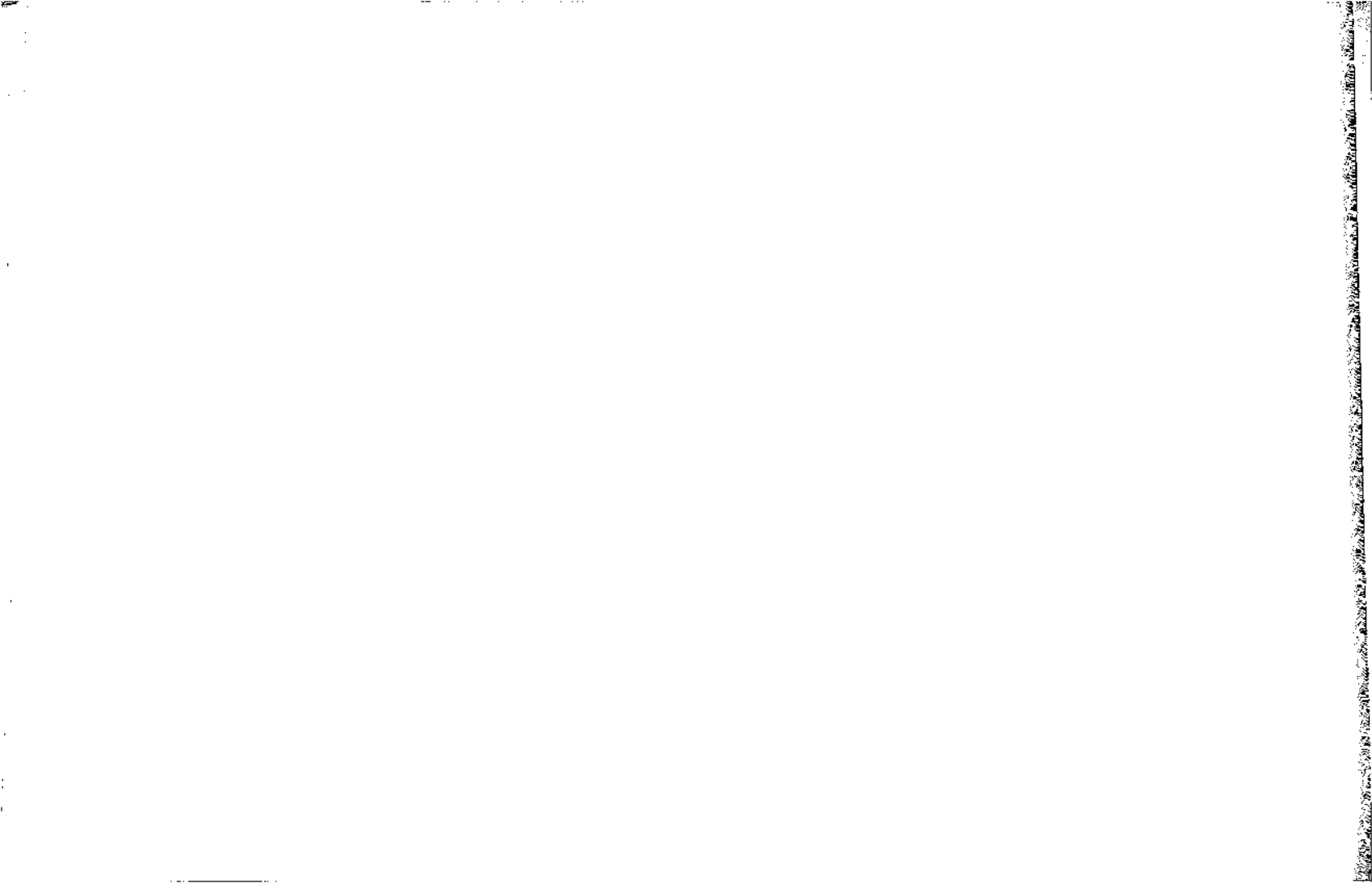
The man in the doorway said, 'Yes, this is the house.' I was embarrassed by the whole situation and I didn't know what to say. This was clearly not the home of a person in need of help! 'Whom do you want?' 'I want the man I asked for.' 'I am that person!' I couldn't say anything, so the man continued, 'Well, what do you want?' 'Excuse me, sir, I am mistaken. The fact is that there is somebody by this name who is in great need of help.' 'No, I am the person. There's nobody else here. As you see, by God's grace I have everything that I want and my needs are looked after by Him. There's nothing wrong. There is some mistake on your part.'

I was about to return, completely frustrated and disappointed. I didn't know what to do or what to tell Baba. We had come all that long distance and now I didn't know what to do. But a child came to my rescue. He came out from the man's drawing room, speaking good English. They speak a different language there in the South, and I had to speak in English as I did not know their language.

The child said, 'I know that man. I know the house where he lives.' He came out to me, and the owner of the place admonished him, but the child wouldn't listen. The problem, you see, was that



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among South Indians many have similar family names but with different first names. The child knew this particular person because his father, being a contractor, had originally built this very house for that man. When he was reduced to poverty he couldn't pay the contractor, so the contractor, had completed the house and went to live in it himself. In this way the child knew the man who had been reduced to poverty, and he led me to his house.

It was a very poor locality, very poor indeed, but in spite of the poverty I saw in the street that there were lights lit for the Divali celebration. As it was the Festival of Lights, all were to have lights that night in their houses. Even a lamp is all right if one is very, very poor. But there was one house that had not even a single lamp placed outside, no light whatsoever. The child pointed it out to me from a distance, saluted me and returned.

I approached the door. It was open and through it I could see just a single room. I knocked at the door. A single oil lamp was burning dimly inside a room with no furniture whatsoever, but which contained a life-size statue of Lord Krishna. Before it was a young lady, worshiping Krishna. I stood there, dumbfounded. No furniture whatsoever, and only this life-size statue of Lord Krishna. Most probably, of all the belongings they had had, this they had not been able to part with and so had brought it with them.

I had no heart to disturb the lady in her devotion, but at the same time I was duty-bound. Baba was waiting at the station platform, and I couldn't afford to waste my time here, because he was the Lord.

I knocked at the door, and the young woman turned and looked at me. She came towards me and said, 'What do you want?' She spoke very good English. I said, 'I am sent by my elder brother. He is waiting at the station, and he would like to meet this gentleman. Is he here?' I spoke out the name again.

She said, 'Yes, he is here.' She invited me inside the room. I went in, and it was dark except for that tiny little flickering lamp. I could barely see a man lying on the floor. On one side of the room I made out a lady, also sick. She was the mother. The young lady pointed to both of them. 'They are my parents,' she said. She was apologetic, saying that, but she never mentioned anything about her poverty although she couldn't offer me a chair to sit down on.

I comforted her. She asked me the purpose of my visit. I said, 'My elder brother has come from Bombay, and he is waiting at the railway station platform. He has some work to do with your father, and he has in mind to render some help.' She said, 'But how is it that he knows my father?' I said, 'Will you please give me one promise? Within an hour's time I will bring my elder brother here and everything will be made clear to you. You should not worry about anything. We are not strangers. We know your people. Please do one thing - don't leave the house before I bring my brother here.' She promised me this and I wished her goodbye and left the house.

I went straight to Baba and brought him back in a tonga. On our way I told Baba the whole story, and he was really very happy. Within an hour's time we were at the house. In those days we had to carry with us all the things that were required for this particular type of work. We needed water and a bucket and basin to wash the feet of the needy person to whom the love offering was to be made. Then we used a brand new towel to dry the feet that had been washed by Baba. The money that was to be given had to be at hand. Then there was other paraphernalia that was also needed by Baba.

Before entering the house, knowing the situation, I half-filled the bucket with water. We also had to carry a small basin for the feet of the needy to be washed, otherwise the water would flow out on the floor. Then we went inside and I introduced my elder brother to the lady. Both parents were so sick that they couldn't acknowledge the visitor. Baba stooped down and gestured that I should start pouring

water on one foot and then another, holding the basin under the husband's feet. Then Baba sat down and washed his feet, after which we removed the basin and threw the water out.

The young lady didn't know what was happening, because without any further introduction or explanation Baba started his ministrations. After the feet were dried by Baba, the towel was handed over to the lady, and Baba bent down further and put his forehead on the feet of the sick. Then he offered a large sum of money in an envelope to the man. He couldn't even move, so it was placed on his chest, under his hand.

The daughter was told to take care of the sum that was placed there, and I said to her for Baba as was customary, 'Please accept this amount as a gift from God and oblige us.' Those words were always said at the time of such an offering. After having said this, Baba would never tarry for a moment.

We left the house, but before we could step outside the daughter started wailing and fell at the feet of Lord Krishna. In a very glowing voice she said, 'Oh, Lord, I never knew that you were so compassionate, so kind and so merciful. No sooner do I implore you for help than within a few minutes you send me the help.' Little did she know that the statue that she worshiped in the form of Lord Krishna had come in man-form as Meher Baba. It was a most touching sight - Baba's visit had been made at just the right moment. Baba was very happy with us there, and of course when Baba is happy we are all happy too.

God does not listen to the language of the tongue and its japs, mantras, devotional songs and so on. He does not listen to the language of the mind and its routine meditations, concentrations and thoughts about God. He only listens to the language of the heart and its message of love, which needs no ceremony or show, only silent devotion for the Beloved.

-Meher Baba

Turning the Key

After Moradabad we went further on foot towards the Himalayas to Najibabad....in the coldest time of the year. There, unfortunately, or fortunately, it happened that for the first time Kaka had a heart attack. This was a calamity inasmuch as the whole party depended on Kaka to cook the food we begged. Whatever we brought from our begging, he would collect and prepare....

Baba wanted to take particular care of Kaka, so he was put in Baba's own tent during the night after he had the attack. Baba said, 'It's no good proceeding like this with Kaka, so now we must go by train.' But we had no money. How to go by train? ... Baba said to a couple of us, 'All right, you go out and get the train tickets from someone.' I think it was Adi and I who were sent to find a prospective helper.

We went into Najibabad to carry out Baba's wishes which, as usual, were woven with conditions. Among these were that Baba and the four women companions should travel by first class to Dehra Dun, and the rest of the companions, all men, were to travel in third class. The task Adi and I had to carry out, then, was to go in search of a person who would give us five first-class tickets and about twenty third-class tickets from Najibabad to Dehra Dun.

In the city we finally decided upon a person whom we would approach with this request. He was a businessman. We had entered his office as if inspired to go there. We looked inside, knocked at the door, asked permission to approach the proprietor and told him what we wanted. Surprisingly, he didn't mind spending the money for this request.

He called his clerk and asked him to calculate the total of the fares. When this was done, at once he ordered his cashier to hand over the amount to us. But we said, 'Sir, we can't accept money.' He said, 'How will you go? How will you buy your tickets?' We told him, 'We are camping at a certain spot

on the outskirts of this town, and the head of the party has given us certain instructions. If you can follow them, he will be very pleased. The instructions are that we should not take any money that you might give us. On the contrary, you should instruct your own men to purchase the tickets, to be delivered to us at the time we are to board the train.

He said, 'What time is the train? What time have you fixed?' We said, 'The train is tomorrow morning at four o'clock.' 'Early morning! The early hours! Oh so the train you are taking is going to Dehra Dun? Right, right, I'll do that.' Then he called his man to acquaint us with one another so we would recognize each other the next morning. We then left the place happily and informed Baba that the work was done.

Baba was also very happy about this. Just imagine, approaching a person for not one or two tickets, but for twenty third-class tickets and five first-class tickets! And it didn't take much time. We only had to say what we wanted. It took hardly fifteen to twenty minutes with the person concerned to accomplish the whole project. Early the next morning we boarded the train and went to Dehra Dun....

What happened to all the animals, carts and tongas?...I'll tell you. Some of them followed us to Dehra Dun, but the rest were disposed of en route. These were years of great disturbances in India - 1947 to 1951, 1952. It was the time of partition, and there were many riots and disturbances taking place. The movement of the trains, and most especially of the goods trains. ... their movements were completely disorganized, and if anyone approached the railway authorities with private requests, they invariably threw up their hands and said that the priority had to be given to government movements. So you will be surprised when I tell you of the cooperation we got when Baba wanted those animals transported. We approached a station master nearby and said that we would like to have a number of goods wagons. He asked, 'For what purpose do you want them. Is it goods wagons you want, or do you just have some freight you want to be sent by a goods train?' We said, 'No, we would like to have

some wagons.' 'Wagons! For what purpose?' We said, 'We have some tongas to be hauled and some bullock carts and a camel, a horse and a cow ...' 'What is this?' 'Well,' we started to explain, 'the thing is that...'

Of course the station master tried to ask the clerks, but we said, 'Look here, we are on a pilgrimage and these things must accompany us. We cannot go any further by foot, so we would like to haul them by train and we need your help.' He told us to come the next day and meanwhile he would consider the whole thing. Baba sent us again the next day, and we found that the station superintendent had arranged for three wagons for us. Thus, to our surprise, wagons were placed at our disposal, and we were able to carry the animals to the destination Baba wanted.

In short, whatever we tried to do in the New Life to carry out Baba's commands, our efforts were fulfilled without difficulty. Therefore I often say that in the midst of a life of helplessness and hopelessness, really speaking, the New life *with* Baba was not a hardship

... (always) the must would offer him a seat and sometimes say, 'We play with You, we speak with You, we take food with You, and we make jokes with You, in our ignorance.' When Baba sent the mast back to Risikesh, he caressed Baba's face in a very loving manner and said, 'Please, surely call me in the coming life. I will also definitely come then at your call.' ... His last look at Baba was most touching. ...



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The stories were selected to reflect the many aspects of our own journeys with Baba, to infuse humor, encouragement and insight into our travels with the Eternal Beloved. The images were created to keep before us the beautiful face of the One with whom and to whom we travel this road of our life.

this is book no. _____

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